



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Public Instruction  
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

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\*\*\***NEWS RELEASE**\*\*\*

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CONTACT: Jana Rausch, Milken Family Foundation, (310) 570-4774  
Barbara Bowers, Milken Family Foundation, (310) 570-4773

## Two Wisconsin educators receive Milken Family Foundation awards

MADISON—Teachers from schools in Colby and Milwaukee received \$25,000 awards from State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster in surprise all-school assemblies this month as they were named 2006 Milken National Educators.

Andrea Payan, a fifth-grade teacher at Morgandale Elementary School in Milwaukee, and Michele Stewart, a fifth-grade teacher at Colby Middle School, were selected as Milken National Educators without their knowledge by a blue-ribbon panel facilitated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The award programs were held on Oct. 19 and 24 as part of the Milken Family Foundation's 20th Anniversary Awards tour.

"Milken Educator Awards generously reward and encourage exceptional educational talent," Burmaster said. "These teachers focus on student learning and success. It is a great honor to join the Milken Foundation in recognizing them at a national level as being exactly what good teachers should be."

Burmaster also commended the Milken National Educator Award Program for acknowledging the importance of quality educators to student achievement and for the potential the Milken National Educator program has to inspire young people to consider education as a career. "Research repeatedly shows that the single most important school-based factor in student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. Attracting dedicated young people to the profession is vital to Wisconsin's mission to close the achievement gap and ensure a quality education for every child," Burmaster added.

This is the eighth year the Milken Family Foundation has presented its National Educator Awards in Wisconsin. Established in 1985 with the first awards made in 1987, the Milken Family Foundation will present more than \$2 million in financial awards and honor up to 100 outstanding educators in 48 states and

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the District of Columbia this year. The foundation has recognized more than 2,200 exceptional educators and awarded more than \$56 million since the Milken National Educator Awards Program began.

“Good teachers are the linchpin in our education system, playing a critical role in propelling student learning,” said Lowell Milken, chairman and co-founder of the Milken Family Foundation. “Every child deserves to be in a classroom with a teacher who inspires, illustrates, and advances excellence. It’s imperative that as a nation we recognize the importance of outstanding teachers and encourage young, talented people to choose teaching as a career.”

Recipients of the Milken Educator Awards are selected on the basis of numerous criteria, including exceptional educational talent as demonstrated by effective instructional practices and student learning results in the classroom and school; exemplary educational accomplishments beyond the classroom that provide models of excellence for the profession; strong long-range potential for professional and policy leadership; and an engaging and inspiring presence that motivates and impacts students, colleagues, and the community.

The recipients will receive their \$25,000 unrestricted cash awards at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference, an all-expense-paid professional development conference to be held in April 2007 in Los Angeles, Calif. The educators also are invited to join the Milken Educator Network, a resource of educators and other influential leaders accessible to fellow teachers, legislators, school boards, and others who are shaping the future of education.

The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards were created to celebrate, elevate, and activate the highest caliber professionals to our nation’s schools. The Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards Program, dubbed the “Oscars of Teaching” by *Teacher Magazine*, is the largest educator awards program in the nation. For more information, call (310) 570-4775 or visit the Milken Family Foundation website at <http://www.mff.org>.

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**NOTES:** This news release is available electronically at < [http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2006\\_137.pdf](http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/dpi2006_137.pdf) >. Additional information about Wisconsin’s 2006 Milken National Educators and the Milken National Educator program is available on the Department of Public Instruction news release website < <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/eis/prmenu.html> >.